

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

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R 091541 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9546

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR GRAIN AND FEED DIVISION,
FAS FROM BROWN

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET GRAIN PROSPECTS

REF: FASTO 17 TO MOSCOW

1. REUTERS ARTICLE HAS NOT BEEN SEEN BY AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE BROWN. REUTERS CORRESPONDENT SAYS ARTICLE BASED ON FEB. 28 EDITIONS PRAVDA, SELSKAYA ZHIZN AND SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA. FOLLOWING POINTS EMERGE FROM REVIEW THESE NEWSPAPERS.

A) THERE IS NO GENERAL REFERENCE TO CONDITION WINTER WHEAT IN UKRAINE, NORTH CAUCASUS, AND MOLDAVIA.

B) SAME FOR SOIL MOISTURE.

C) PRAVDA QUOTE INCORRECT. CORRECT QUOTE IS
" MANY FARMS PLAN TO INCREASE GRAIN AREA (REPEAT GRAIN
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AREA) BY 6 - 10 PERCENT THIS YEAR."

D) SEED SHORTAGE NOTED (92 PERCENT OF REQUIREMENTS) REFERS ONLY TO PERENNIAL GRASSES. SILAGE CORN SEED REQUIREMENTS FULLY MET; ONLY TWO- THIRDS REQUIRED AMOUNT AVAILABLE FOR FODDER ROOT CLAPS AND CUCURBITS.

2. DESPITE INACCURACIES IN REUTERS ARTICLE, EACH POINT CITED IN REFTEL HAS VALIDITY. AG ATTACHE COMMENTS FOLLOW:

3. WINTER GRAINS MAY BE IN GOOD CONDITION IN UKRAINE, NORTH CAUCASUS, AND MOLDAVIA. ACCORDING LATEST WEATHER REPORT (SELSKAYA ZHIZN, MARCH 4), SPRING GROWTH STARTED IN SOUTHERN MOLDAVIA, AND IN SOUTHERN UKRAINE -- ODESSA, NIKOLAEV, KHERSON, ZAPOROZHE, DONETS, AND ROSTOV OBLASTS. CONTINUING GROWTH NOTED IN CRIMEA AND KRASNODAR KRAY WHERE CONDITION WINTER GRAIN SAID " BASICALLY GOOD." ONLY AREAS OF CONCERN WERE VOLGA-VYATSK AND URALS WHERE WINTER GRAIN " CONTINUED INCREASED EXPENDITURE OF ENERGY ON RESPIRATION" UNDER DEEP SNOW COVER. IMPOSSIBLE TO EVALUATE CONDITION WINTER GRAIN ON BASIS SCATTERED PRESS REPORTS RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL FARMS IN UKRAINE AND NORTH CAUCASUS. FARMS NOT USUALLY CITED UNLESS EXEMPLARY. TWO REPORTS FROM STAVROPOL GIVE RISE TO RESERVATIONS. ONE FARM REPORTED WHEAT OVERWINTERED WELL, BUT THAT TEN PERCENT OF BARLEY KILLED. ANOTHER FARM NOTED THAT WINTER GRAINS " SOWN IN THE OPTIMUM PERIOD" WERE COMING OUT OF DORMANCY IN GOOD CONDITION. EMPHASIS ON TOP DRESSING WINTER GRAINS ALSO RAISES DOUBT. FERTILIZATION MAY BE SIMPLY TO INCREASE YIELDS AS STATED, BUT ALSO MAY BE TO STIMULATE GROWTH OF WINTER- WEAKENED GRAINS.

4. ACCORDING PUBLISHED WEATHER DATA, SOIL MOISTURE SHOULD BE NORMAL OR ABOVE IN ALMOST ALL MAJOR WINTER GRAIN REGIONS AS WELL AS IN SPRING GRAIN AREAS. ONLY EXCEPTIONS NOTED IN PRESS ARE EASTERN ROSTOV OBLAST AND EASTERN STAVROPOL KRAY (BOTH DROUGHTY AREAS).

5. REPORT THAT SPRING WHEAT REPEAT WHEAT AREA TO BE 6 - 10 PERCENT GREATER THAN USUAL IS ERRONEOUS. TOTAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GRAIN REPEAT TOTAL GRAIN AREA IS BEING INCREASED UP TO

13 PERCENT IN VARIOUS LOCALITIES. RETURNS ON THIS CAMPAIGN ARE STILL FRAGMENTARY. NONETHELESS IT IS APPARENT THAT MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE POLYANSKIY IS STRIVING TO SOLVE THE " GRAIN PROBLEM" -- A SOLUTION THAT ELUDED STALIN, KHRUSCHEV, BREZHNEV (AND MATSKEVICH). KRASNODAR KRAY IS INCREASING THE GRAIN AREA BY 360,000 HECTARES; STAVROPOL KRAY BY 130,000. " KOLKHOZES AND SOVKHOZES OF RYAZAN AND KALUGA OBLASTS, MORDOVIAN ASSR, AND OTHER AREAS OF CENTRAL NON- CHERNOZEM ZONE HAVE DECIDED TO INCREASE GRAIN AREA THIS YEAR BY 6 - 10 PERCENT." IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO CAMPAIGN EVIDENT FROM

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CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 SAL-01 OMB-01 SS-14 NSC-10

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PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH SELSKAYA ZHIZN LEADER MARCH 7:

" IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERRATE ANOTHER SOURCE (OF INCREASING GRAIN PRODUCTION) -- EXPANSION OF GRAIN SOWN AREA. THOSE KOLKHOZES AND SOVIEHOZES WHICH ARE INCREASING GRAIN AREA AT EXPENSE OF LOW- YIELDING ANNUAL GRASSES, BY PLOWING UNUSED LAND, AND BRINGING RECLAIMED LAND INTO PRODUCTION EARLY ARE ON CORRECT COURSE. AND HOW MUCH SO CALLED UNSUITABLE LAND THERE IS ON MANY FARMS. IT CAN BE BROUGHT INTO CROP ROTATION AND PLANTED TO FORAGE CROPS, WITH LAND FREED FROM FORAGE CROPS

PLANTED TO GRAIN. IF EACH KOLKHOZ AND SOVHOZ ATTENTIVELY ANALYZED CROPPING PATTERN AND FOUND POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING GRAIN AREA BY EVEN 100 HECTARES, TOTAL GRAIN AREA OF COUNTRY WOULD INCREASE BY ALMOST 5 MILLION HECTARES."

6. SEED FOR SPRING PLANTING CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM - QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND LOCATION. THIS PROBLEM NOT LIMITED TO FORAGE CROPS -- INCLUDES ALL SPRING GRAINS. QUALITY HURT BY WET, COLD WEATHER DURING HARVEST IN SIBERIA, KAZAKHSTAN, AND THE NORTHWESTERN EUROPEAN USSR. ELSEWHERE IN EUROPEAN USSR, QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF SEEDS DIMINISHED BY DROUGHT. CONDITIONING OF SEED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTINUES. ALTHOUGH SOVIET GOVERNMENT IS EXTENDING ASSISTANCE -- INCLUDING SEED FROM STATE RESERVES -- THE SINS OF THE FATHER WILL BE REFLECTED IN GRAIN YIELDS THIS YEAR.

7. ASSISTANT AG ATTACHE HUTH DEPARTED MOSCOW MARCH 4 TO EVALUATE CONDITION WINTER GRAIN. ITINERARY: MOSCOW- OREL- KHARKOV- ROSTOV- KRASNODAR- PYATIGORSK. HUTH RETURNS MOSCOW MARCH 9.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: hilburpw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LONDON02819
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730323/aaaahhcd.tel
Line Count: 204
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AGR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: FASTO 17 TO MOSCOW
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31-Jul-2001 by daviscw>; APPROVED <02-Aug-2001 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 971112
Subject: SOVIET GRAIN PROSPECTS
TAGS: EAGR, UR
To: AGR,
MOSCOW
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005